

REMARKS

In the Office Action of December 8, 2003, the claims were indicated as allowable over the prior art, and such indication is gratefully acknowledged.

However, a number of formal rejections and objections were made, including objections to the drawings and to the specification on the basis that the attachment to the vacuum tube was not illustrated in the drawings.

In response, this phrase has been deleted from claim 1, and thus, these objections are now moot.

In addition, certain spelling errors were noted at page 8, and these have been corrected by an amendment to the specification.

Claims 1-14 were also rejected as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention, under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

It was said that in claim 1, the phrase "a second vent hole provided at another side surface" makes claim 1 confusing.

Applicant has now amended claim 1 to recite that the second vent hole is at the side surface previously mentioned and not at another side surface.

Applicant has submitted additional prior art cited in a corresponding patent application. Applicant hereby takes this opportunity to distinguish the present claims from this prior art.

Reference 1. Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication No. 2000-166829

Reference 1 discloses a vacuum cleaner having a vortex flow generating member provided in an opening of the dust collection container, the vortex flow generating member comprising: a base formed into a shape of a long-cylinder; and vent orifices provided on a side surface of the base.

Reference 1, however, does not disclose: providing an airflow guide on the side surface of the base; providing vent holes on an end (distal portion) of the base; and providing filters in the vent holes provided on the side surface of the base.

Reference 2. Japanese Unexamined Utility Model Publication No. 52-69861 (application No. 50-157496)

Reference 2 discloses a vacuum cleaner having a vortex flow generating member provided in the opening of the dust collection container, the vortex flow generating member comprising: a base formed into a shape of a short-cylinder; vent holes provided on a distal portion of the base; and filters provided in the vent holes provided on a distal portion of the base; and filters provided in the vent holes.

Reference 2, however, does not disclose: providing the airflow guide on the side surface of the base; and providing the vent holes on the side surface of the base.

Reference 3. Japanese Unexamined Utility Model Publication No. 56-40744 (application No. 54-122608)

Reference 3 discloses a vacuum cleaner having a vortex flow generating member provided in the opening of the dust collection container, the vortex flow generating member comprising: a base formed into a shape of a short-cylinder; vent holes provided on the side surface of the base; and filters provided in the vent holes.

Reference 3, however, does not disclose: providing the airflow guide on the side surface of the base; and providing the vent holes on the distal portion of the base.

Therefore, references 1-3 do not disclose employing a structure as follows: "a vortex flow generating member is provided in an opening of the dust collection container, the vortex flow generating member comprising: a base which is formed into a shape of a short cylinder or a truncated cone;

Reply to Office Action  
Appl. No. 10/054,267  
Page 8


an airflow guide provided on a side surface of the base; a first vent hole provided at an end of the base; a second vent hole provided at the side surface of said base; and a filter provided in each of said first and second vent holes." It is strongly believed that the present invention is novel and nonobvious according to the results of the above comparison.

#### CONCLUSION

In view of the Amendment and Remarks, reconsideration is respectfully requested. Claims 1-14 are still pending and a Notice of Allowance for these claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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